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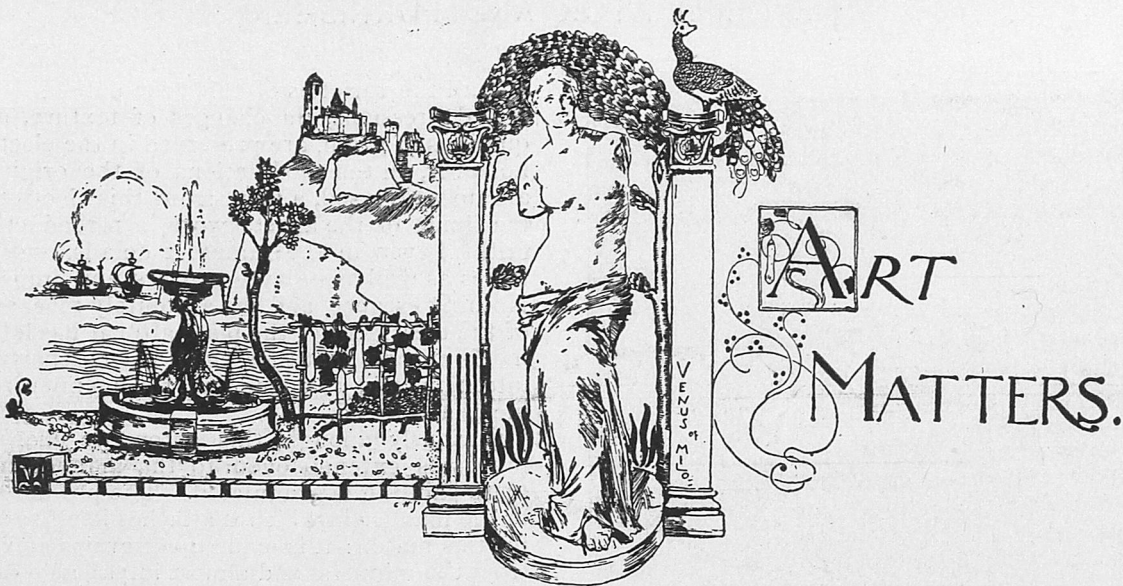
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A NEW BLACK AND WHITE ART.



AMONG the many remarkable achievements with which Professor Herkomer has punctuated the history of his life, few are likely to surpass in interest his invention of the astonishing reproductive process, some of the results of which he has just put before the public. This device, the perfecting of which has employed him in the intervals of

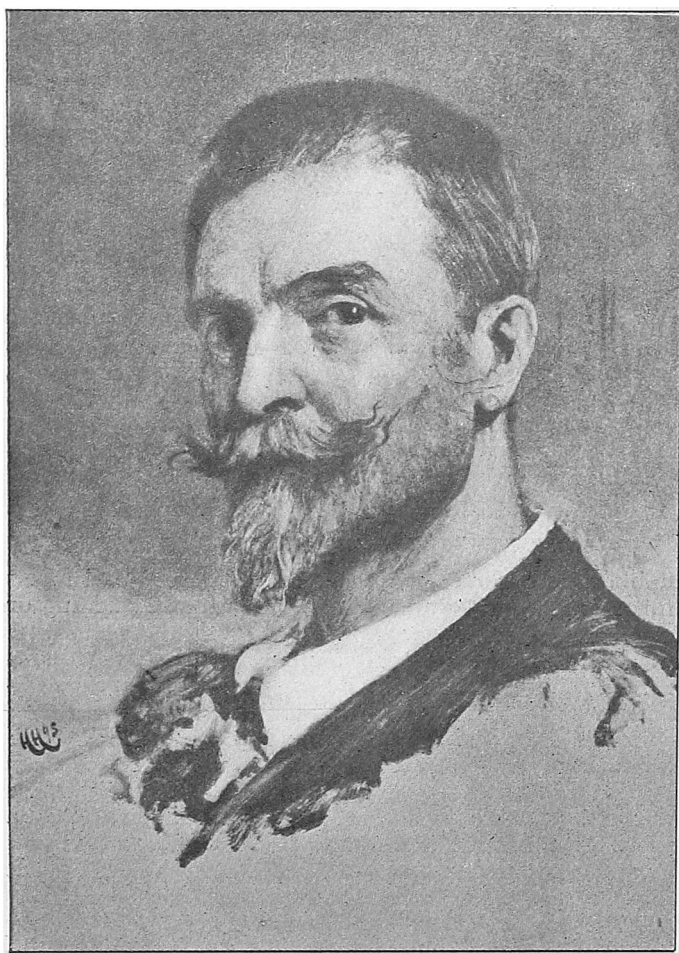
his many other occupations during the past four or five years, is so admirable, so well suited to artistic requirements, so simple, and at the same time so effective that its possibilities of application seem almost without limit. It gives to artists a means of perpetuating their work without having to go through the laborious process of acquiring either practical or theoretical knowledge of any other form of artistic expression than the one to which they are accustomed. There is no need for them to struggle with the difficulties of lithography, no necessity to learn the troublesome details of mezzotint, no reason why they should study the vagaries and uncertainties of photography, and above all there is no obligation on them to cramp their own aspirations and to limit their freedom of action in any endeavor to "accommodate themselves to the process." All they have to do with this new black and white art is to paint in monochrome whatever subject they want reproduced and to leave everything else to the working of an actually automatic method which gives them back their own handiwork in a permanent and reproducible form.

It is this freedom from any technicalities which cannot be learned in a few minutes that makes this invention so desirable. Everyone who knows anything about oil-painting can profit by Professor Herkomer's ingenuity, and can set to work at once to produce black and white pictures that can, by the help of a printing press, be multiplied almost indefinitely. The only limitations in working are that the artist has to paint with a particular slow-drying ink, and that he has to substitute a metal plate for his canvas. This ink, however, is in consistency and appearance very like oil paint; it is handled in exactly the same manner as any of the pigments which the artists' colorman supplies; it is applied to the plate with hog-hair or sable brushes as the artist prefers; it can be shaped with the finger or a

dabber, or removed with a stick; and as it keeps moist for many weeks almost any amount of retouching or alteration is possible with it. Moreover, it is an absolute black, and is painted onto a plate with a silvered surface, so that the worker is not hampered by the difficulty which confronts him in etching or mezzotint, of accommodating himself to a condition of affairs which is exactly the opposite of that which prevails in his every-day work. In the older processes he has to get his effects by the placing of light lines or surfaces upon a black ground, but in "Herkotype," as the irreverent have already nick-named the Professor's invention, what



"A STUDY." FROM A PLATE-PAINTING BY
PROF. H. HERKOMER, R.A.



"A PORTRAIT STUDY." AFTER A PLATE-PAINTING BY
PROF. H. HERKOMER, R.A.

he prepares for the operations of the plate-maker is really an ordinary black and white drawing in which the clean white ground is left for the highest lights. Under these happy conditions there is practically no limit of tone gradation, and the ultimately resulting print can be made to show every variation between the pure white of the paper and the extreme depth of black which a solid ink surface will give.

The treatment of the plate picture after it leaves the artist's hands is as simple as the method of production which he has to follow. The plate is sent to the reproducing company while the sticky ink surface is still moist, that is to say, within a certain number of weeks or months after the execution of the painting. It is then dusted freely over with a fine powder—a compound in which one of the most important ingredients is a metal that is electrically conductible—which adheres to every brush mark and every film of ink which the artist has placed upon the plate. The excess of powder is removed with a large camel-hair brush and the painting, coated with so much of the powder as the ink surfaces have firmly taken up, is placed in an electrotyping bath. There copper is deposited upon the face of the plate to which the powder has imparted a definite and beautifully varied granulation, and after the process of depositing has continued long enough to give to the electrotype a thickness sufficient to prevent its buckling or giving way in the printing-press, the plate is removed from the bath and the electrotype stripped off.

What has by this time resulted is a negative of the original plate painting. The powder gave to the paint surface the granulation necessary for effective printing;

and all the varieties of this granulation, its projections and depressions, its changes of texture, and peculiar qualities of grain, are preserved in the electrotype. As, however, all the modulations of the original painting are now reversed, a print from this electrotype gives a fac-simile of the artist's work, a reproduction which is faithful even in the minutest details, and accurate in trifles as well as in large matters and important facts. Nothing escapes, and the absolutely mechanical nature of the treatment of the plate after it has left the artist's hands ensures that there shall be no departure from his intentions and no change in the manner in which his views are stated.

Curiously enough, this automatic character of the processes extends even to the manner in which the plate painting is granulated. The powder itself varies in the manner in which it attaches itself to the ink, and for this reason: it is made up of grains of varying size, from the minutest and almost impalpable dust to fairly large particles. The coarser grains will not stick to any surfaces on which the ink lies only in a film, and therefore these remain covered only with the fine dust which makes in the electrotype an almost imperceptible roughening. The more boldly painted parts, which are more or less loaded with ink, attract, on the other hand, the large particles and retain them for the electrotype to record. Therefore throughout the resulting printing surface, there is a delightfully spontaneous effect of variety and of modification of texture, a variation which is so faithful to the original handiwork that by its very exactness it becomes artistic. There is too, in consequence of this habit of the powder, an excellent preservation of the correct relation between depth of tone and openness of handling. Unlike other processes, in which the granulation is a photographic one and of even texture all over the plate, this "Komer-gravure," to use another jocular title which has been bestowed upon it, gives in the deepest darks the largest and most open grain. Therefore the shadows in the prints, which have so far been produced under this invention, are, without losing depth and richness, as luminous and varied as the more subtle passages; and do not degenerate, as is so often the case in photographic processes, into merely black and opaque smudges. There is light in them, and changes of tone even inside a dark tell with proper effect. What a gain this is will be strongly appreciated by everyone who has given much consideration to the modern method of reproducing works of art. Indeed, it is not going too far to say that had Professor Herkomer's invention no other exceptional qualities, this one merit would more than justify all the labor and thought he has bestowed upon the process, and would put it at once ahead of its competitors.



The history of the invention is distinctly interesting. It was in 1885, during his visit to America, that the first germ of the idea from which he has since gathered so excellent a harvest took root in the Professor's fertile mind. An American artist fascinated him with a form of work which was at the time a novelty to him. This was the producing of what are known as "monotypes," or the painting, with printer's ink on a metal plate, of pictures which are afterwards, without being engraved, run through a printing-press and so transferred to paper. Of course, by such a device, which has the justification of antiquity for its practice, only one impression of the picture is possible, and the work on the plate after its passage through the press ceases to exist. Professor Herkomer was so attracted by the peculiar qualities of the prints obtained in this manner that he occupied himself frequently with the method and experimented largely with its capabilities. In all his experiments, however, he was met with the trouble that his one print was all that the plate, so treated, would give him; and this fact, which seemed to him a matter for regret, led him to make an effort to discover some means by which repetition of the original painting would be made possible.

About four years ago he took up the idea as a subject for serious consideration, and set to work systematically to put his ideas into shape. He made a series of experiments, the result of which he patented. For the next two years, however, he did nothing with the invention; it lay idle and apparently neglected. At the end of that time he began a fresh course of experiments in the same connection, and soon found his way to making so large a number of improvements upon and alterations in his original idea that a second patent became necessary. When this was secured the invention in its present form was complete and fit to set before the public. It has taken, as may well be imagined, a very large amount of contrivance to bring it into a shape capable of giving results so remarkable as those which are embodied in the reproductions of his prints which illustrate this article; and probably no one but the Professor himself could appreciate the extent of the ground covered by his investigations. Everything, indeed, had to be examined and to be worked out through an alteration of successes and failures. The right surface for the plates had to be decided upon; the composition of the ink was a matter of long and anxious experiment; and the peculiar qualities of this most important contribution to the success of the process had to be arrived at by an exhaustive system of comparison and testing, so that exactly the most suitable ingredients might be discovered. The right powder for dusting the plates was by no means easy to find, and it was long before the correct combination of granulation and conductivity was secured; even the electrotyping processes had to be fully and elaborately rehearsed, so that there might remain no avoidable chance of failure.



TABLE DECORATIONS.

BY THE ASSOCIATE EDITOR.

THE table of to-day is a dainty affair. It is not overburdened with lace, nor decorated with a mass of flowers in different hues, the great point being that an elegance of appearance should be given to the board and that cool effects should be gained by simple treatment. Like all the summer months August can show as fine a field decoration as the preceding ones, and especially among the ferns and wild grasses, whose neutral colors are so charming as a table adornment. Green and greys go well together. They harmonize well, and so as an unpretentious arrangement they are very desirable. To make a centre coolness put a square piece of ice in a dish of the same form, line the edges well with small, delicate green ferns, and with them the silver grasses so abundant in this month. Cover the entire ice with roses and daisies well grouped together, which form for the whole a delightful scheme.

For the decorative artist there is an abundance of subjects which can be used in the decoration of linens for embroideries. Among these are the red and white clover, those wayside plants which are peculiarly happy for the holding of table accessories. Any table can have some four or five pieces of these charming schemes in fine linens, which, perhaps, in treatment do not correspond, but look well, provided a tone in color is well considered—a harmony is produced. The centre-piece still holds its own. In fact, it will never be out of fashion, but the table of the present is one in which there is an individual choice of taste, and with the cloth now so universally used and so well equipped in lace insertion and edge a very small ornamentation is quite enough, however formal a function may be.

Among the pretty table courses which admit of a floral arrangement, the nasturtium in the form of a salad is an exceedingly decorative one. This inexpensive dish should be made just before serving, the blossoms added at the very last moment. To make this especially artistic every tone and color should be well grouped together from the lightest of yellows to the darkest of orange, with their leaves, which form for the whole an enchanting bit of color.

To make a supper table a pretty scheme the damask should be one very fine in quality, with an edge of lace effect and above it an insertion to match. As a centre cloth a big square can be given in white chrysanthemums and green leaves, and on it a large rose bowl filled generously with blossoms of any tint desired. At each corner of the board can be rose bowls of the smallest

